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a real beauty he deserves recognition. Miss Mears has written a beautiful and convincing story. A moral problem is taken and set forth in a mosaic of lovely pictures. To catch and imprison the hidden essence of things; to see life and spirit and transmit them to the printed page; to sing again the songs of the city streets; to catch the fleeting lights and glories of sea and sky, the colors and shapes of objects, the lines and hues of streets—this is the business of the novelist, and it is this that Mary Mears is doing and doing with high poetic feeling and great insight. Her prose halts at times, but at others it reaches a rare lyric beauty. "The Bird in the Box" is a worthy successor of the "Breath of the Runners" and is a novel full of tenderness, beauty and high ideals.

The Finer Grain. By HENRY JAMES. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910.

IN one of his earlier books, Mr. Henry James has given advice to the young writer—"Emphasize the personal note," he cautions him, and no one can say that Mr. James has not consistently followed his own advice.

As to whether the results of this have been altogether successful or not must always depend upon the taste of the reader. Mr. James began with a remarkable endowment. He attained in his middle years to a perfect manner for his own subtle and psychological matter. But there are few readers of English who can follow his latest work without some irritability. Open the book at random and measure on any two pages the length of the sentence, and one finds the shortest statement will spread over five lines, and that the author does not hesitate to lengthen it out to fifteen. He is merciless as to parentheses and sentence-structure. As to a beginning of a tale, a middle where the crisis is at the highest point, and an end which is the *dénouement*, Mr. James will none of these old-fashioned artifices. The story only stops when Mr. James's interest flags.

"Life," he would seem to say, "does not present itself as a constructed round, then why should a story?"

Of the five tales contained in this volume, "The Bench of Desolation" is at once the finest and the most Jamesian. Somehow it recalls, although faintly, that absolutely perfect story, *The Altar of the Dead*; not that the content is the same, but that it likewise is a study in a long fidelity and continuity of purpose, and also Mr. James has evidently bent himself to handle it with great exquisiteness.

Always aloof from his characters, in a quite unusual and lofty manner the *deus ex machina*, he seems at times to move his creations with a humorous and gentle tenderness, as if even the creator understood the little passions and tenacious purposes by which they are moved.

Crapy Cornelia is one of Mr. James's studies in sordidness and smallness, for it must be admitted that Mr. James has always had a touch of that quality with which George Eliot endows Dr. Lydgate, the quality that believes that for some reason elegance and fineness really do reside in the best of furniture and the most modern of hangings.